(c) the rule under which the indenting of items by trade name is allowed and does it amount to promoting the sale of a particular brand by Government; and

(d) the steps taken to ensure the discontinuance of the procedure forthwith and if not the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI BUTA SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Kendriya Bhandar, Super Bazar and NCCF have reported that they are selling thousands of items to a large number of Government offices. Since a large number of indents are involved, to compile the information will involve heavy man power and is a time consuming process which may not be comsumerated with the results to be achieved thereof.

(c) All three organisations procure and supply all such items which are needed and indented by Ministries, Government Departments and its undertakings. However, efforts are made to appraise the indentor of all the available brands of the items. There is no intention on their part of promoting sale of a particular brand.

(d) In view of the position explbined in part (c) above, Question does not trise.

**Steps to Check Rising Prices**

791. SHRI O. P. KOHLI: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has not been able to check the increase in the prices causing insurmountable difficulties to the common man;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) whether any concrete steps|proposals are under consideration of Government-to give some relief to the commonman?

THE MINISTER OF CIVII SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI BUTA SINGH): (a) The Government has accorded the highest priority to check the rise in the prices in general and of essentiaj commodities in particular, Necessary measures are also being taken to augment their suppliers.

(b) The rise in the prices of certain essential commodities like pulses, edible oils etc; is due to various factors but the existing gap between their demand and supply is the major factor.

(c) Apart from taking certain long-term measures for increasing the production of commodities which are in short supply, immediate measures taken by the Government to augment the availtbility of these items include their imports. Further, items like rice, wheat, palmolein, sugar, kerosene and soft coke are distributed through the Publit Distribution System at prices below the open market priles State Governments|UT Administrations have been requested to supply other essential commodities like pulses, note books etc. througt fair price shops. Stringent actions are being taken against bltck marketeers, hoarders and those indulging in unfair trade practices under Essential Commodities Act and Frevention of Bltck Marketing Act etc. A close watch is kept on the availability and price levels of essential commodities so as to enable the Government to take timely remedial measures for checking rise in prices.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HFALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. C. SILVERA):

792. SHRI O. P. KOHLI: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMFR AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the prices of consumer items like laundry soaps, battery cells, torches, biscuits, toothpastes, bathing

soaps etc. have increased considerably in the last one year;

(b) if so, by how much, brand-wise and company-wise;

(c) how do these prices compare with the prices during the last three years, year wise;

(d) whether Government have not been able to hold the price-line;

(e) if so, the reasons thereof; and

(f) the details of other items whose prices have risen high during the previous months giving the reasons therefor as also the reasons for not containing their prices?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI BUTA SINGH): (a) to (c) The details of trend in Wholesale Price Indices of consumer items like laundry soaps, battery cells, torches, biscuits, toothpastes, bathing soaps etc. during the last one year and during the last three years are given in the Statement. (*See* below). The details in respect of brand-wise and company-wise are not available.

(d) and (e) The Government has accorded the highest priority for controlling the prices of essential commodities. Towards this end, concessions are granted in the Annual Budget every year in respect of excise duties and customs duties wherever necessary to increase their production. Stringent actions are being taken against hoarders, black-marketeers and those indulging in unfair trade practices under Essential Commodities Act etc.

(f) The other consumer items which have shown price-rise during the previous months are coarse grains, selected pulses like Arhar, Moong and Urad and vegetable oils. The prices of pulses have risen because of existing gap in their demand and supply to the tune of about two-three million tonnes. In respect of edible oils also, the gap between their demand and supply is over five lakh tonnes per annum. The prices of coarse grains have risen because of their lean supply season. As per the available data, the prices of edible oils and pulses have now stabilised.

**Statement**

*Trend in the percentage variation in the wholesale price indices of consumer items during the year-ending Feb., 95 and in the corresponding period in Feb., 94, Feb., 93 and Feb., 92.*

| Items | Percentage variation | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Feb., 95 | Feb., 94 | Feb., 92 | Feb., 92 |
| Laundry Soap | 15.9 | —5.7 | 4.4 | 20.4 |
| Battery Cell | 0.8 | —0.7 | 5.2 | 15.6 |
| Biscuits | 3.0 | 5.8 | 2.4 | 16.8 |
| Tooth Paste | 1.6 | 17.1 | 1.67 | 6.9 |
| Toilet Soap | 21.5 | 9.6 | 6.4 | 8.8 |